

The Magnificent Ballet Russe, Its Splendors and Surprises, the Creator and the Interpreters of a New Art

The Birth of a New Sort of Ballet From Revolutionary Principles

By MICHEL FOKINE

WHAT are the essential characteristics of the revolutionary Russian ballet from the pen of the creator, Mr. Diaghileff?

The work of the revolutionaries was to open the sluice-gates and let in the flood of vital emotion. The inflexible rhythms of the dance were suddenly caught up into the masterful rhythms of life itself.

The new ballet works on the principle that there is not one designer for the dance, another for the music and a third for the settings, but one designer, one rhythm, one dominating impulse for the whole.

The older ballet developed the form of so-called "classical dancing," consciously preferring to every other form the artificial form of dancing on the point of the toes, with the feet turned out, in short, bodies, with the figure tightly laced in stays, and with a strictly established system of steps, gestures and attitudes.

In the new ballet, on the other hand, the dramatic action is expressed by dances and mime, in which the whole body plays a part. In order to create a stylized picture the ballet master of the new school has to study, in the first place, the national dances of the nation represented.

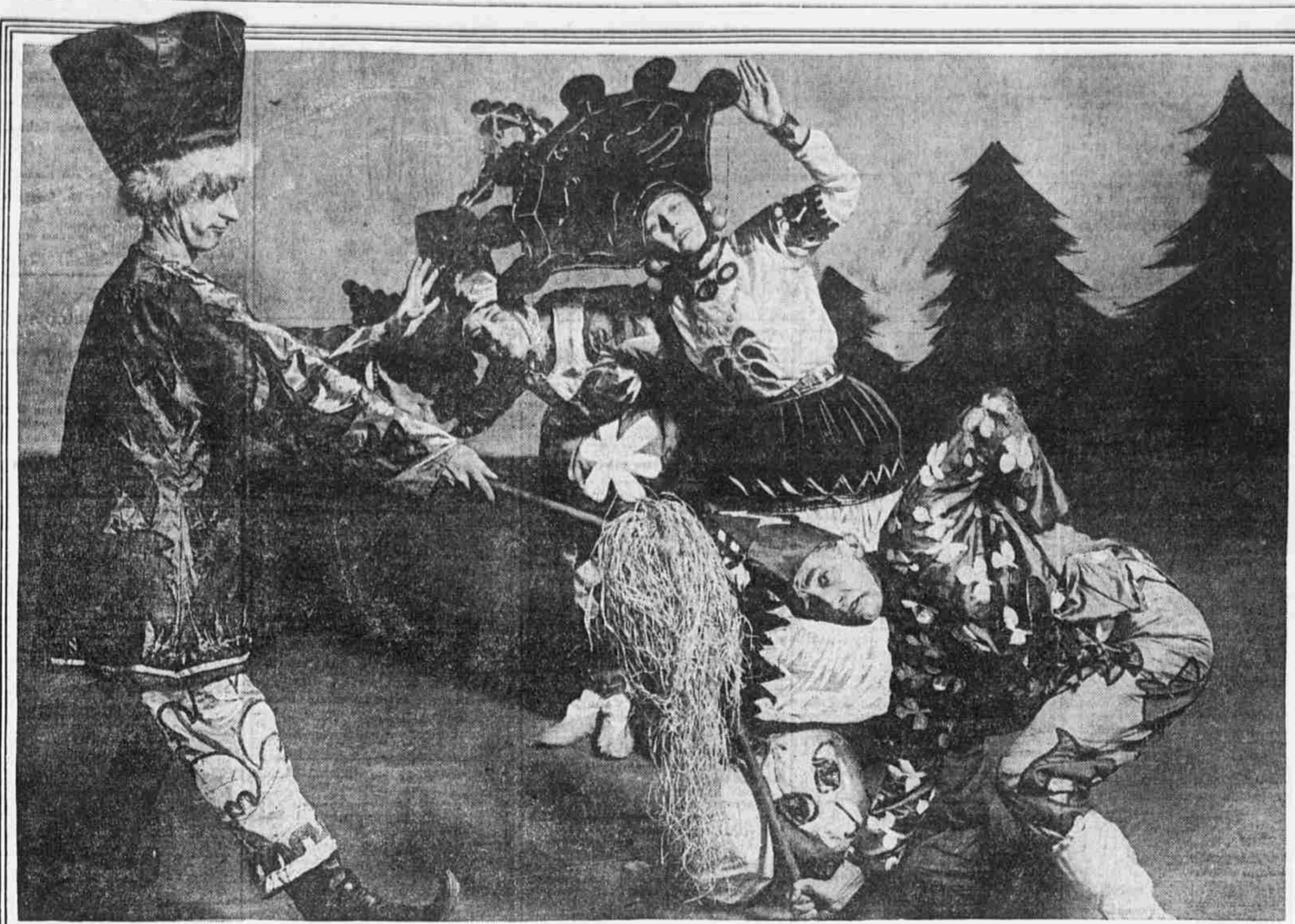
As there were "five positions" at the basis of the old "classical dancing," so there are five rules of faith and practice for the new dancing of the Russian ballet.

The first rule is that the new ballet, while recognizing the excellence both of the older ballet and of the dancing of Isadora Duncan in every case where they are suitable to the subject to be treated, refuses to accept any one form as final and exclusive.

The second rule is that dancing and mimetic gesture have no meaning in a ballet unless they serve as an expression of the dramatic action, and they must not be used as a mere diversissement or entertainment having no connection with the whole ballet.

The third rule is that the new ballet admits the use of conventional gesture only where it is required by the style of the piece, and in all other cases endeavors to replace gestures of the hands by mimics of the whole body. Mime can be and should be expressive from head to foot.

The fourth rule is the expressiveness of groups and of ensemble dancing. In the older ballet the dancers were ranged in groups only for the purpose of ornament, and the ballet master was not concerned



A bit of bizarrerie from the Ballet Russe. A characteristic glimpse of the fantastic scenery, costumes and dancing which Diaghileff has welded into a new, startling and vigorous beauty in "Le Soleil de Nuit," an arrangement of Russian folk dances. A similar artistic spirit pervades the dozen ballets which he will show Philadelphia next week.

The Miraculous Diaghileff, Out of Whose Genius the Ballet Sprang

By WILLIAM GUARD

FOR six years America has been hearing about the Ballet Russe. Of course there are Russian ballets and Russian ballets. But there is only one Diaghileff, Russian ballet and that is The Russian Ballet, which, when it invaded Paris in the spring of 1909, created a sensation in the French capital the memory of which even the war has not obliterated.

Attempts have been made from time to time to present imitation Russian ballets or fragments of Russian ballets in America of late years with more or less success, considering the material obtainable. The real Russian ballet, however, the Ballet Russe, which Paris and London lost their heads over, is possible only when it has at its head Serge Diaghileff. That is why it is equally well known as the Diaghileff Ballet throughout Europe.

And then who is this man Diaghileff? In a word, he is the organizing, vitalizing spirit of this extraordinary combination of artists—the co-ordinating brain of this body of dancers, composers, painters and poets, all of whose services he has combined to produce the astonishing and fascinating stage pictures which, with their riot of color, movement and music, have furnished a new form of entertainment to the seekers after novelty in sensation.

Though just rounding 40, Diaghileff has been a life full of activity, as an activity devoted chiefly to artistic pursuits. An attaché of the Russian court, some years ago as a rich amateur it was his habit to surround himself with and encourage the efforts of younger and less fortunate men of talent in music, painting and literature. He showed a fine appreciation of real worth in the matter of art. His generosity was unstinted. If he saw a young man that he thought had something in him, Diaghileff's purse was at his disposal.

It was away back in 1906 that Diaghileff conceived the idea of opening the eyes of the skeptical Occident to what might be called the Renaissance of artistic Russia, something up to them almost totally unknown beyond the frontiers of the Czar's domain. Without any flourish of trumpets Diaghileff appeared in that year in Paris with several dozen cases full of pictures of his young friends of the modern school of Russian painting. He secured a modest salon without any fuss or feathers and personally superintended the hanging of these canvases. When he had everything to his liking he invited artistic Paris to come and see the exposition. The next day the Russian pictures were the talk of the town. The jaded palate of Paris experienced a new thrill, "Les Russes" at once became the vogue and that picture show was the advance guard of the famous Russian ballet invasion.

Diaghileff, to whom his grateful artistic associates were only too glad to subscribe the credit of the exposition's success, became a sort of hero of the hour. It did not spoil him, however. In fact, it was the limelight that sought him, not he the limelight. His enthusiasm was further stimulated by what he had accomplished on behalf of the art life of his country, and he at once saw the possibility of even more effectively making known to the Western world the artistic soul of Russia. The next year he organized a great series of Russian historical musical concerts at the Paris Grand Opera and presented for the first time with a company of Russian lyric artists Moussorgsky's opera, "Boris Godunov."

The success of the concerts and of "Boris" was really immense. It was a revelation of the possibilities of Russian art heretofore undreamed of by Westerners. The season following Diaghileff made noteworthy by the presentation of several Russian operas and by introducing for the first time in Paris the wonderful ballet which he had himself organized in every detail and which included the very best available exponents of the poetry of motion on the Russian stage, the most startling effect of latter day Russian scene painting and ballet music composed not only by the Russian composers already known outside of Russia, but by several younger men who might be called Diaghileff's discoveries.

The successes of the previous year were reaffirmed with a crescendo. The Russian ballet became an annual necessity in Paris' springtime. Doubtless thousands of pleasure-seekers came to Paris especially to see it. They never went away disappointed.

WHAT YOU WILL SEE AND HEAR AT THE BALLETS NEXT WEEK

Monday, March 27

"LOISEAU DU FEU"—Fairy dance in one act; music by Igor Stravinsky; book and choreography by Fokine; decorations by Golovine. Principal dancers: MM. Massin and Cecchetti, Mile. Tchernikova.

The story is the simple tale of a wandering prince, who in disguise, takes the form of a bird. The bird is a fairy who later saves the prince from death at the hands of a wicked king and his elves, and returns him to the lady of his love.

The decorations are soft, like tapestry with infinite detail worked in and wonderful high lights. The music is perhaps the most unusual and most interesting in the whole series of ballets.

"CARNIVAL"—Romantic scenes in one act; music by Robert Schumann; book and choreography by Michel Fokine; scenery and costumes by Leon Bakst; orchestration by Rimsky-Korsakoff, Liadoff, Glazounoff and Tcherepnine. Principal dancers: Lydia Lopokova, Adolf Bolm, Lubov Tchernikova, Alexandra Wassilvaka, Lydia Sokolova, Stanislas Idzikowski, Enrico Cecchetti and Leonide Massin.

To the well-known music of "Le Carnaval" of Schumann, the various characters of the Italian puppet plays disport themselves in romantic fashion and in crinoline costume against conventionalized blue hangings by Bakst. All the figures of the commedia dell'art are there—Colombine, Harlequin, Pantaloon, Pierrot and many others.

"SCHEHERAZADE"—Choreographic drama in one act; music by Rimsky-Korsakoff; book by Leon Bakst and Michel Fokine; choreography by Michel Fokine; scenery and costumes by Leon Bakst. Principal dancers: Flore Revalles, Adolf Bolm, Enrico Cecchetti, M. Gregoroff and others.

"Scheherazade," probably the masterpiece of Bakst, has been diverted by its author from the program provided for the music by the composer and now tells the story of the famous prelude to the Arabian Nights. The Shah Zeman is incredulous when his brother, the Sultan Schahriar, sings the praises of his favorite Zobeide, and persuades the Sultan to test her fidelity by pretending to go on a hunting expedition of several days' duration. Hardly have the lords departed when the harem is in an uproar. The fat eunuch is soon wheedled into opening the bronze and silver doors which lead to the apartment of the stairward negro slaves. Finally he opens the golden door behind which Zobeide's lover, sleek as polished ebony, is waiting to be bound into the room.

The two start a voluptuous orgy which reaches its maddest height when the Sultan, in sinister silence, returns unexpectedly. Vengeance is swift and everything runs black, as all are massacred. Zobeide, after vainly imploring pardon, stakes herself at the Sultan's feet to avoid the fate of the other inmates of the harem.

Wednesday, March 29

"CLOPATRE"—Choreographic drama in one act; by Leon Bakst; dances by Michel Fokine; music by S. Tadjneff, Rimsky-Korsakoff, Glinka and Glazounoff. Principal dancers: Flore Revalles, Adolf Bolm, Lydia Sokolova and Alexander Gavriloff.

This ballet is based on an exotic tale by Theophile Gautier. An amorous Egyptian youth has seen the queen of the

exceptional nature of the event which will take place at the Metropolitan Opera House next week is not the only reason why much space must be given to it. Only two of the ballets to be presented by Serge Diaghileff's company are at all familiar to Philadelphia. The others, without at least a little preparatory survey, might be confused in the very richness of their appeal. To assist those who are in doubt concerning the nights on which they wish to go and to give them some advance indication of what they may expect when they arrive, we detail here a list of the ballets to be presented hereafter. There are 12 different ballets and 8 repetitions. It should be noted that the list of principal dancers is incomplete in certain cases and cannot be understood as final, for Mr. Diaghileff has been known to change the personnel in one piece of short notice.

The cuts accompanying this analysis of the ballets are line reproductions of sketches by Leon Bakst, the genius in costume and decoration of the Russian company.

sapphire Nile and has defied her courtiers, renounced his humble mistress Tia-or, and has offered his life for a sign of Cleopatra's favor. The queen is amazed by his devotion, and while her slave girls dance bacchanals with black servitors and strew sweet-scented rose leaves, she listens to his suit. But his triumph is short. Swift death by some rare poison follows it. The vast hall, supported by massive columns, is deserted, and as the royal galley carries its precious burden down the sacred stream, the faithful Tia-or falls lifeless on the body of her faithless lover.

"LE SPECTRE DE LA ROSE"—Choreographic tableau from a poem by Theophile Gautier; music by Carl Maria von Weber, adapted by L. Vaudoyer; scenery and costumes by Leon Bakst; book and choreography by Michel Fokine. Principal dancers: Lydia Lopokova and Alexander Gavriloff.

A pas de deux, danced to the familiar music of Weber's "Invitation to the Waltz," orchestrated by Berlioz. It tells of the dream of a beautiful girl who, upon her return from the ball, falls asleep with a full-blown rose in her hand. The delicate flower is the symbol of her romance, and as she dreams, clasping it to her breast, it comes to life in the shape of a wondrous phantom with whom she dances. But her happiness is too great; she awakens to find only a few fragrant petals scattered about her dainty feet, where an instant before her dream lover had been kneeling.

"SOLEIL DE NUIT"—Ballet of Russian games, arranged by Leonide Massin.

Russian Magic By H. T. Parker

THE magic of the Russian Ballet—the magic that will make it what a strange and wonderful to the American stage—is a magic of ensemble. When it deploys its full forces in the languorous and misty beauty of "Les Sylphides" it summons a flawless and poetized vision. It dances through "Carnaval" and "Papillons" and fills the theatre with the atmosphere of romantic fantasy. In the scenes from "Prince Igor" it keeps and whirls as in primeval strength and barbaric prowess. An hour later the stage glows with the exotic illusion of the Indian legend of "Le Dieu Bleu" or quivers with the sensuous excitement of "Thamar." To them may succeed the ray-folk-life and the gay whimsies of "Petrouchka" or the Oriental savagery of "Scheherazade." In all these ballets each dancer has a clear individuality, yet each is a plastic and almost motionless part of the whole. The vitality, the variety, the wealth of illusion are superb. The spectators are transported out of themselves.—Boston Transcript.

Friday, March 31

"LOISEAU DU FEU" repeated; see Monday's program.

"THAMAR"—Choreographic drama in one scene after a poem by Lermontoff, the poet of the Caucasus; music by Mily Alexievich Balakireff; choreography by Michel Fokine; scenery and costumes by Leon Bakst. Principal dancers: Flore Revalles, Adolf Bolm and many others.

The rise of the curtain discloses the fantastic court of the seductive Caucasian queen, Thamar. Her castle is surrounded by the turbulent waters of the River Terek, where so many of her unfortunate lovers have met their fate at the hands of her strange companions, discovered dancing grotesques and trying in vain to free her of enail. She ignores them and her terrible eyes survey the wild Dariol mountain pass, which can be seen through the great window.

sky; music by Claude Debussy; scenery and costumes by Leon Bakst. Principal dancers: Leonide Massin and others.

There is virtually no story to "The Afternoon of a Faun." It is an animated decoration, conceived within the rigid limits of an antique bas-relief. The principal figure is the faun. The scene at the back is merely decoration without an attempt at natural representation. The unearthly, haunting strains of Debussy's music guide the action of the faun, who is lifted for a brief space out of the nebulous somnolence of brutish existence by the bright apparition of a company of nymphs. They appear from the left, moving in the conventional attitudes of painted figures, arms and legs in angular disposal. They stand rigidly posed below the faun's retreat. Startled from his reverie and scenting the presence of beings that stir his sensual yearnings, the faun leaves his perch and descends to their level. Surprise, fear, curiosity and such swift emotions are interpreted by strange, elemental movements of the hands and arms. Startled, the nymphs flee, but immediately return, while the faun, growing bolder, seeks to woo them. Again they disappear and one returns for a final view of the woodland male. They lock arms, but a sudden panic sends her gliding away, leaving behind a filmy scarf that the faun picks up and odor, prolongs the stimulus to his relief.

"CARNIVAL" repeated in Monday's program.

Thursday, March 30

"LES SYLPHIDES"—Romantic reverie; music by Chopin; choreography by Michel Fokine; scenery and costumes by Alexandre Benois. Principal dancers: Lydia Lopokova, Lubov Tchernikova and Adolf Bolm.

A series of diversissements in the strict classic ballet style arranged to nocturnes, waltzes, preludes and mazurkas of Chopin in orchestra versions. The stage setting is a parklike landscape, with a pavilion at the rear, against which the pure white ballet costumes are thrown in relief.

"PETROUCHKA"—Choreographic drama in four burlesque tableaux; music by Igor Stravinsky; book, scenery and costumes by Alexandre Benois; choreography by Fokine. A Russian "Pagliacci," which opens with a street fair, with crowds and strange characters and a puppet master and his players. The succeeding scenes develop the distorted love affair of the Columbine. The whole is done in a vein of burlesque, which makes the pathos the more affecting. Lydia Lopokova is the bright star of the piece.

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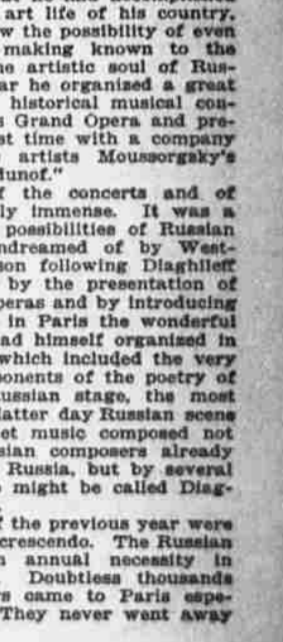
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ENTER HARLEQUIN!



A bit of the ballet "Carnaval," as introduced by the French artist, M. Fokine.

EXIT SPECTRE!



Montenegro catches the climax of "Le Spectre de la Rose," where the fantasy.